

CHASING THE WIND

Part 8: If I Only Knew Then...

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Ecclesiastes 8

¹Who is like the wise?

Who knows the explanation of things?

A person's wisdom brightens their face
and changes its hard appearance.

²Obey the king's command, I say, because you took an oath before God.

³Do not be in a hurry to leave the king's presence. Do not stand up for a bad cause, for he will do whatever he pleases. ⁴Since a king's word is supreme, who can say to him, "What are you doing?"

⁵Whoever obeys his command will come to no harm,
and the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure.

⁶For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter,
though a person may be weighed down by misery.

⁷Since no one knows the future,
who can tell someone else what is to come?

⁸As no one has power over the wind to contain it,
so no one has power over the time of their death.

As no one is discharged in time of war,
so wickedness will not release those who practice it.

What I wish I had known at age 18:

Right King

Right authority

Right proximity

Right cause

Right ally/alignment

Right heart

Right timing

Right delivery

Right perspective

⁹ All this I saw, as I applied my mind to everything done under the sun. There is a time when a man lords it over others to his own hurt. Then too, I saw the wicked buried—those who used to come and go from the holy place and receive praise in the city where they did this. This too is meaningless.

¹¹ When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, people's hearts are filled with schemes to do wrong. ¹² Although a wicked person who commits a hundred crimes may live a long time, I know that it will go better with those who fear God, who are reverent before him. ¹³ Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow.

¹⁴ There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: the righteous who get what the wicked deserve, and the wicked who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless.

Right Question: Why do the wicked seem to come out ahead of the righteous?

Right Answer: There is a cost for making the righteous choice.

Right Wisdom: Don't mistake temporary success for eternal reward

¹⁵ So I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun.

¹⁶ When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe the labor that is done on earth—people getting no sleep day or night—¹⁷ then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all their efforts to search it out, no one can discover its meaning. Even if the wise claim they know, they cannot really comprehend it.

Right ending:

At the end of the right process, living with tension of the right questions, you should still gather some friends, have a good meal, hydrate, and to go sleep knowing that the King will provide sweet rest.

Small Group Questions

- 1) What were you like at age 18?
- 2) What do you wish you would have known at 18 that you know now?
- 3) Read Ecclesiastes 8. What's your opinion of Solomon's wisdom? Where do you find hope in his words?
- 4) How do you reconcile the tension around righteous people having to pay a price for their convictions?
- 5) Have you ever experienced a "right ending"? What does godly rest look like to you?
- 6) How can we pray for you right now and throughout the week?